

AFGHANISTAN

69.3%

AUDIENCE REACH

BOSNIA

23.2%

AUDIENCE REACH

IRAQ

76.9%

AUDIENCE REACH

KOSOVO

38.0%

AUDIENCE REACH

NIGERIA

19.2%

AUDIENCE REACH

According to recent surveys commissioned by USAGM. In estimating "weekly reach," USAGM measures audiences who report using USAGM content "in the past week." The figure also estimates unduplicated audiences, meaning an individual is counted only once, regardless of how many platforms or networks they use.

Countering Violent Extremism

Extremist groups such as ISIS, Boko Haram, and Al-Qaeda restrict access to information, instill fear, intimidate local populations, and propagate disinformation. They also invest heavily in state-of-the-art misinformation campaigns, sophisticated media production skills, and social media engagement to dominate regional discourse and push their own narrative.



(VOA)

USAGM'S OBJECTIVES

U.S. Agency for Global Media's (USAGM) approach to countering violent extremism (CVE) is grounded in its mission and role as an independent public service media organization. The long-term USAGM goal of supporting free, open, and democratic societies serves U.S. interests around the world because these societies are more peaceful and prosperous and less likely to threaten their neighbors or harbor extremists. USAGM's programming targets vulnerable communities, thus providing an alternative to violent extremist propaganda.

USAGM's networks work together to counter violent extremism through programming efforts that expose the tremendous harm of radicalization, build resilience within communities, encourage dialogue and participation, establish platforms where all voices can be heard, and disrupt extremist narratives through credible, fact-based journalism. USAGM's networks and language services cover

IMPACT

USAGM reaches large audiences in many of the target languages. For example, on a weekly basis, USAGM's networks reach almost two-thirds of Iraqis and one in five Nigerians (including more than a third of Hausa-speakers, who largely reside in the northern region of the country under the greatest threat from Boko Haram). USAGM is also reaching out to other vulnerable populations, such as Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, to fill the vacuum for news and information.



violent extremism as a news topic, but they also work to engage and connect audiences, getting at some of the root causes of extremism — the sense of voicelessness and disenfranchisement.

USAGM's networks rely on credibility with audiences, an essential attribute built through proactive, long-term presence; engagement and avenues for discussion; a broad range of programming; and global impact. USAGM emphasizes reaching vulnerable audiences, especially young people, in places threatened by extremist rhetoric and violence.

PROGRAMMING AND INITIATIVES

Four USAGM networks develop CVE-related programming: the Voice of America (VOA), the Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) and Radio Free Asia (RFA). They produce Arabic, Kurdish, and Turkish content for the Middle East and North Africa; Dari, Pashto, and Urdu programming for South Asia; Hausa and Somali for Africa; and many other vernacular languages of Central Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Balkans.

MIDDLE EAST BROADCASTING NETWORKS

MBN broadcasts in Arabic throughout the Middle East and North Africa, including areas that are the hardest hit by violent extremism. Through television, radio, and digital platforms, MBN presents accurate and unbiased news to millions of people each day. In addition to more than 12 hours of news daily, MBN produces original television, radio, and digital programs dedicated to empowering women, defending free speech, and encouraging ethnic and religious tolerance. MBN's original debate shows productively address the political, economic, social, and cultural issues that drive the spread of extremism in Iraq and Syria.

MBN regularly covers sensitive topics not found on other Arabic media outlets (e.g. political Islam, jihadism, freedom of expression, and religion) and engages audiences to join the discussion. MBN features expert analysis, including religious scholars who challenge extreme interpretations of Islam and encourages critical thinking and analytical debate. MBN programs and reports focus on the root causes of extremism and explore solutions to issues such as unemployment, marginalization, political exclusion, and repression by the state. Additionally, MBN highlights stories of building bridges between different communities and religions.

"Raise Your Voice" is a digital platform launched in 2015 to counter extremism in Iraq through highlighting its tragic human cost and debunking its extremist ideologies. It encourages Iraqis to explore and engage in open discussions on the causes and consequences of violent extremism and intolerance, including topics such as religious freedom and minority rights. It carries scholarly and analytical debate of deeply entrenched radical interpretations of Islamic teachings and fosters dialogue on acceptance and coexistence among ethnic and religious minorities.

RADIO FREE EUROPE / RADIO LIBERTY

RFE/RL's five Central Asia services lead engagement with audience members and social media users on extremism-related topics, such as the radicalization of economic migrants to Russia and Europe and how prisons offer fertile ground for radicalization. RFE/RL's Central Asia Newswire provides objective news to media outlets in the region, which is ranked among the most restrictive media environments in the world.

In the Western Balkans, RFE/RL engages young and vulnerable audiences in conversations that explore the root causes of extremism and the effects of radicalization on their communities. RFE/RL's Balkan Service launched a social media campaign in 2018 called "Not in My Name," which continues to engage young audiences in Bosnia and Kosovo in responsible dialogue and helps them confront extremism and radicalization. Content is produced in the Bosnian and Albanian languages.

In South Asia, Radio Azadi (Afghanistan) and Radio Mashaal (Pakistan) provide comprehensive news coverage, analysis of conflict in the area, and insight into the devastation wrought by extremist forces. The short video profiles of Radio Azadi's Dari- and Pashto-language "Who Was the Victim" project highlight the damage Afghan families have suffered from violent extremism. Radio Mashaal airs a radio project focusing on how extremists seek to radicalize youth via social media while showcasing the experience of Pashtuns living abroad who engage with people of other faiths through tolerant, friendly relationships.

As a result of their reporting on topics that local domestic media will not cover out of fear of violent retribution, RFE/RL journalists have been threatened, harassed, and even killed – most recently in November 2020, when Helmand correspondent Mohammad Ilyas Dayee was murdered in a targeted car bombing.

VOICE OF AMERICA

The Extremism Watch Desk, launched in 2015, produces in-depth stories on trends in violent extremism in South and Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa. The content provides an alternative to extremist narratives and looks at ways communities respond to the challenges of extremism. The Desk also curates vernacular content from language services and develops these stories in English for distribution to wider audiences.

VOA's South and Central Asia (SCA) Division broadcasts to regions heavily impacted by the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda, as well as other terrorist groups. The Division reaches out to young people and women on social media, examining lives lost or interrupted by extremism. On the front lines in Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, and the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, SCA reporters brave many security risks to provide an accurate picture of the situation on the ground. The Division recently produced an award-winning documentary "Hell and Hope" about Yazidi girls who escaped after being abducted and raped by Islamic State militants. The services amplify





moderate voices that support tolerance and dispel extremist perspectives. The Afghanistan Service and Deewa (Pashto) run special projects countering disinformation about polio vaccinations. The Afghanistan Service also has a project discouraging poppy growing (a major source of income for the Taliban).

VOA's Africa Division provides accurate, unbiased news and information in countries and regions destabilized by Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab. VOA's "Boko Haram: Journey from Evil" documentary delivers an unprecedented examination of the terror group, drawing on 18 hours of secret video obtained exclusively by VOA to reveal a hidden world of torture and executions and profiling Nigerian citizens resisting the terrorists and working to bring about change.

VOA's fast-paced youth-oriented programs in Hausa ("Taskar VOA" and "Yau Da Gobe") and Somali ("Dhalinyarada Maanta") provide positive alternatives to extremism and explore opportunities for entrepreneurship, education, and other options.

RADIO FREE ASIA / BENARNEWS

Through BenarNews, an online news portal launched in 2015, RFA engages underserved and vulnerable audiences in South and Southeast Asia with news and content in Bengali, Thai, Bahasa Malaysia, Bahasa Indonesia, and English.

The portal offers comprehensive coverage of security issues in the region, from piracy in the Sulu Sea to the long-running insurgency in Muslim-majority southern Thailand. It highlights the impact of radicalization on local communities, such as the thousands of Filipino Muslims still displaced years after ISIS seized a city in the southern Philippines.

BenarNews also documents the persecution and plight of the religious minority the Rohingya in Bangladesh and Myanmar.

BenarNews journalists were on the ground in Marawi city in the southern Philippines two days after Islamic State-linked militants seized it in May 2017 — and throughout the five-month battle to defeat them. BenarNews interviewed Malaysians and Indonesians who joined the Islamic State in Syria, and their devastated family members. It tracked how Al Qaeda's Southeast Asian affiliate, Jemaah Islamiyah, had recruited new members and grown wealthy during the past decade. Since its inception six years ago, BenarNews has reached an audience of more than one billion Facebook users and earned more than 12 million article reads.